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THE WHITE HOUSE

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November 15, 1979

Presidential Directive/NSC-53

TO: The Vice President
The Secretary of State
The Secretary of Defense

ALSO: The Attorney General
The Secretary of Commerce
The Secretary of Transportation
The Secretary of Energy
The Director, Office of Management & Budget
The Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
The Director of Central Intelligence
The Assistant to the President for Domestic
Affairs & Policy
The Director, Office of Science & Technology
Policy
The Administrator, General Services
Administration
The Director, Federal Emergency Management
Agency

SUBJECT: National Security Telecommunications Policy ✓

I have reviewed the report of the National Communications System on the need for a national security telecommunications policy. It is essential to the security of the United States to have telecommunications facilities adequate to satisfy the needs of the nation during and after any national emergency. This is required in order to gather intelligence, conduct diplomacy, command and control military forces, provide continuity of essential functions of government, and to reconstitute the political, economic, and social structure of the nation. Moreover, a survivable communications system is a necessary component of our deterrent posture for defense. In support of national security policy, the nation's telecommunications must provide for:

- Connectivity between the National Command Authority and strategic and other appropriate forces to support flexible execution of retaliatory strikes during and after an enemy nuclear attack.
- Responsive support for operational control of the armed forces, even during a protracted nuclear conflict.
- Support of military mobilization in all circumstances.

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- Support for the vital functions of worldwide intelligence collection and diplomatic affairs.
- Continuity of government during and after a nuclear war or natural disaster.
- Recovery of the nation during and after a nuclear war or natural disaster.

In order to achieve adequate capabilities for these objectives, the following principles are established as national security telecommunications policy:

- National security and continuity of government telecommunications requirements have priority in restoration of services and facilities in national emergencies.
- To the maximum extent feasible, interstate common carrier networks, including specialized common carriers and domestic satellite carriers, should be interconnected and capable of interoperation in emergencies at breakout points outside of likely target areas.
- The National Communications System will make available information necessary to allow interstate common carriers to locate backbone facilities, where possible, outside of likely target areas.
- Functionally similar government telecommunications networks shall be capable of interchange of traffic in emergencies.
- The Federal Emergency Management Agency, in coordination with the National Communications System, shall plan for emergency use of industry private line communications that have significant capabilities (e.g., pipeline, railroad, and airline).
- There must be a capability to manage the restoration and reconstitution of the national telecommunications system following an emergency.
- The National Communications System will consult with the Federal Communications Commission on implementing these principles and will place substantial reliance upon the private sector for advice and assistance in achieving national security and preparedness goals.

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The National Communications System will amend and revise these principles as security needs dictate and submit them to the Special Coordination Committee for approval, as required by E.O. 12046.

Nothing in this directive amends or contravenes Presidential Directive/NSC-24.

Jimmy Carter